

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 32THE NEW YORK TIMES
19 February 1978**Judge Orders U.S. to Pay
And Apologize to Lamont
For Opening His Letters**

A Federal judge in Brooklyn, obviously angered by the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency had opened two love letters written by Corliss Lamont, the civil liberties advocate, to his wife, has ordered the Government to pay Mr. Lamont \$2,000 as compensation.

"Illegal governmental prying into the shared intimacies of husband and wife is despicable," Judge Jack B. Weinstein said as he ordered the two letters sealed.

The judge also ordered compensation in two other cases that have come before him in Federal District Court. He awarded \$1,000 to Victoria Wilson, a 28-year-old editorial employee of Alfred A. Knopf, the book publishing company, and a similar amount to Rodney Driver, a professor of mathematics at the University of Rhode Island. In each case, the judge said that 25 percent of the award would be for legal fees and that the award must be accompanied by a governmental letter of apology.

Professor's Letters Opened

Miss Wilson, Judge Weinstein said, had described herself as "deeply shocked, scared, angry and disillusioned" after learning that routine letters exchanged with her father, who was doing research in the Soviet Union had been opened.

And Professor Driver, the judge said, had suffered psychic damage upon learning that three letters he had written—one to each of three professors at a Moscow University—had been opened.

"Were there fewer possible plaintiffs," Judge Weinstein said, "the court might have considered larger symbolic awards for those plaintiffs who had a number of letters opened over a span of time."

"But the court must be practical. The number of possible plaintiffs runs into thousands and the possible damages, even at the modest level fixed by the court, into the millions."

"These damages, will not be paid by the bunglers responsible for the wrongs, but by the taxpayers, who were unaware of the program."

A United States Senate Select Committee studying the matter had determined that the C.I.A. had opened more than 215,000 letters between 1953 and 1973.

In his five-page opinion, Judge Weinstein noted that one issue remained unresolved—the request by the plaintiffs for the return of their letters. The judge said that he had already received briefs on the matter and that he was scheduling argument for 9:30 A.M. on March 1.

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